

Policies and Guidelines for Weddings at



St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

919 E. Indiana Ave.

Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

208-664-9259 stthomascda.org

"Your every act should be done with love."

1 Corinthians 16:14

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Congratulations on your engagement!

We are humbled that you have chosen St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church as the location to begin this journey in faith. Here are a few things you should know for weddings at St. Thomas.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION vs. WEDDING PREPARATION

There is a saying: “A wedding is a day; a marriage is a lifetime.” In other words, the wedding is the ceremony that initiates your marriage, which is your lifetime commitment to each other. The Church provides marriage preparation classes out of its desire to give you the best start at your new vocation as a sacramentally joined couple.

LIVING YOUR FAITH

If you are asking to be married in the church, please understand that you are asking to make a statement of faith before God and his people. To be married in the Catholic Church means that at least one of you is Catholic. It means that one or both of you are Catholic and are faithfully living out your Catholic faith. The Catholic party/ies should have received the Sacrament of Confirmation prior to marriage, if possible. Please let your assigned clergy know if you are NOT Confirmed.

You don't both have to be Catholic to be married in the Catholic Church. However, one of you must be a baptized Catholic.

Please note: To reserve a wedding date at St. Thomas the Apostle, your freedom to marry in the Catholic Church must be initially apparent. If prior marriages exist for either party without an annulment, we will direct you on what must be done to seek an annulment, and we will wait for that process to be completed before planning your wedding.

Contact our Parish Office (secretary@stthomasda.org) to initiate the planning process and to plan for a priest or deacon to help you with marriage preparation. A staff member will discuss some of the wedding details and follow-up by email. Make an appointment to meet with a pastoral staff member. This appointment will review the process of getting married in our church.

WEDDING FEES

Wedding Fees for REGISTERED Parishioners is \$250

You must be registered with St. Thomas the Apostle at least SIX MONTHS prior to submitting a wedding request. Total fee is payable at the time your date is reserved:

This fee does NOT include any music fees. Contact our music director at music@stthomascda.org for information on those fees.

Wedding Fees for NON-Parishioners is \$2,000

A deposit of \$250.00 is due at the time of reservation with the balance due one week prior to the wedding date.

This fee does NOT include any music fees. Contact our music director at music@stthomascda.org for information on those fees.

SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING

What times are available for scheduling our wedding?

- Friday –3:00 PM
- Saturday –12:00 PM, Nuptial Mass
- 1:00 PM, Nuptial Service

The rehearsal will be held the day prior and is limited to one hour. A reminder that rehearsals and weddings need to start on time. St. Thomas will open two hours before the wedding and will need the church vacated and cleaned up within 1 hour after the end time. Saturday weddings and any photography or socializing afterwards needs to conclude no later than 2:45 PM to accommodate 3:00 PM Confessions. **NO Weddings scheduled on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, during Advent, Lent, the Paschal Triduum, or other designated days.**

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

What about the parish marriage preparation classes?

Deacon Andy Finney and his wife, Roxanne, coordinate our marriage preparation classes. Please contact him to get scheduled. Dcn. Andy can be reached at deacon@stthomascda.org.

Paperwork & Prenuptial Investigation

At least six months before the desired date of marriage, you must schedule a meeting with a priest or deacon who will conduct a “pre-nuptial investigation.” The law of the Church provides certain procedures to determine that a pending marriage is not being coerced and is free from impediments. A “prenuptial investigation” or the “paperwork” consists of gathering documentation / statements from the bride, the groom, and witnesses that testify to freedom from coercion and impediments to the marriage. The interviewing priest or deacon can and will explain the meaning of these documents. Please bring your baptismal certificate.

PRIOR MARRIAGES

Catholics are bound to follow the discipline of the Church; therefore, a Catholic with only a civil marriage is not a recognized Sacramental union. If you are Catholic and have previously entered a civil marriage with a person other than your current bride or groom, and went through a civil divorce, that “civil marriage” must be declared null and void by the Church. Any prior marriages by either party must be investigated, and it is possible an annulment process will have to take place. If either bride or groom has secured an annulment through the Church tribunal, simply submit the paperwork associated with that process including the declaration of a freedom to marry. If you are civilly married to your current bride or groom, we would be happy to celebrate a ceremony for you that the Church calls Convalidation.

What if we cannot do these things?

Please tell us about your circumstance; it could be that unique circumstances can be accommodated.

CHOOSING A PRESIDER

One of the first decisions that a couple should make is choosing the presider. For those who are parishioners, our priests and deacons will be happy to assist you in preparing

for the wedding. You can always request one of the clergies you feel most comfortable with, or we can assign one of our clergy to assist you. Non Parishioners are responsible for making arrangements with their own priest/celebrant to preside over the ceremony or letting us know as soon as possible if one of our own clergy is requested. A wedding can be celebrated as a Nuptial Ceremony within Mass or a Nuptial Ceremony outside of Mass.

Home parish permission

A couple who belongs to another parish must seek permission from their own pastor to be married at St. Thomas the Apostle. Please forward written permission to the parish office..

Visiting priests

If your pastor is in the local area, ask him if he is willing to celebrate the wedding at St. Thomas the Apostle. You may also ask a deacon from your local parish. Our guidelines for local visiting priests/deacons are:

- The priest/deacon should first ask for delegation approval directly from the Rector. Fr. John Mosier can be reached at frjohn@stthomascda.org or 208-664-9259 x7.
- Father John will let the parish staff know if he has granted delegation.
- The priest/deacon will be responsible for helping you complete paperwork required by the diocese.
- An honorarium or donation to the clergy may be given directly to them.
- The priest/deacon must advise us when the file is complete before the wedding and provide a copy at least two weeks prior to the wedding so that all church certificates can be prepared, signed by delegation and sacramental records created.
- All wedding policies of St. Thomas the Apostle must be followed, including those governing decorating, availability, cleaning, etc.

If a couple will be inviting a non-local priest from the Diocese of Boise to preside at the wedding, our deacons may be available to help with completing the preparation process if the couple lives in the local area.

If the couple lives outside of the Diocese of Boise, they can obtain preparation, and complete necessary paperwork, at their local parish, provided we are aware of what they are doing, and the presider approves.

If the couple will be inviting a priest from outside the Diocese of Boise to preside or concelebrate at the wedding, delegation must be obtained. This permission is to be sought in writing, with proof of being a priest or deacon in good standing with their diocese at least two months prior to the desired date.

*Please note, any Mass celebrated at St. Thomas the Apostle **must** be celebrated Novus Ordo, regardless of the celebrant.

Changes in assignment of Clergy

It is possible that, if you are working with one of our priests or deacons, their assignment to the parish could change while you are preparing. If a member of the clergy you are working with is no longer available, please be assured that one of our other clergy will step in and complete the process with you.

RESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE - PROPER ETIQUETTE

You are reminded that St. Thomas the Apostle is a Church, a place of worship where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The conduct, and attire, of the wedding party and the guests should reflect the sacredness of the place. Please refrain from cellular usage, chewing gum, loud talking, inappropriate language, allowing children to run around inside the church, etc. Smoking and drinking inside the church building is prohibited.

Attire

Properly dignified and modest attire at St. Thomas is not only a trait of a Christian people; it is essential to morale and respect for oneself and others. It therefore follows that your attire should equal the dignity of the pursuit of the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony while in the presence of God. Catholic weddings are generally semi-formal. Men should wear a suit or shirt and tie. Women should wear dresses, skirts or dress slacks. When dressing for a Catholic wedding, it is essential to keep in mind that it is proper etiquette to dress modestly.

Alcohol

The clergy presiding at your wedding may refuse to allow the ceremony to occur if the bride and/or groom and/or wedding party has consumed or appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance at that time and must refuse if it appears such consumption may invalidate the consent of the parties to the marriage. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the church grounds.

Clean Up

It is very important that the church be left clean for the next wedding, mass, or parish event. Plan for cleaning up. All items brought into the church, on campus and in the parking lot need to be removed promptly at the end of the service. Please leave the parish facilities as you found them. St. Thomas the Apostle is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS

All photographers and videographers are expected to treat a couple's sacred ceremony and the historical building that is St. Thomas the Apostle with the utmost respect.

What do we need to tell those who will be photographing our wedding?

Photographers

- Photographers may take pictures until 30 minutes before the ceremony and must have all their equipment moved from the sanctuary area by 25 minutes before the starting time of the ceremony. The photographer must ensure respectful decorum, consistent with the sacred nature of the space, is observed by all involved. Pictures taken on the altar must be confined to formal family and wedding party group shots. Under no circumstances should informal shots, including members of the wedding party seated on the altar steps, jumping up and down or other "party" poses be considered in the church.
- At all times during the ceremony, photographers are required to stay behind the last row of seated guests. Under no circumstances may they enter the altar area during the ceremony or go down the center or side aisles beyond that point.

There are no exceptions. There should be no movement in the aisles, pews or around the altar during the wedding ceremony.

- Flash photography is not allowed during the wedding ceremony.
- The entrance procession is considered part of the wedding ceremony. Photographers may not take pictures of the procession from the front of the aisle near the altar.

Videographers

- All video equipment must be set up no later than thirty minutes before the scheduled time or the wedding ceremony in the designated areas, which are by the side door statue areas or the back of the church.
- Videographers must follow the same location, movement and lighting requirements as photographers. To ensure sanctity of the ceremony and reduce distractions, videographers shooting from the side door area must be in place prior to the start of the ceremony and remain there until the ceremony is complete.
- Wiring for microphones may not be run to the altar or pulpit areas. Cordless microphones attached to any member of the wedding party or to the pulpit are not allowed, as they may disrupt the microphone system of St. Thomas. No wires may be laid across aisles or any equipment pinned, stapled or otherwise affixed to church walls.
- The photographer and videographer are never allowed in the altar area, near the Tabernacle or in front of the assembly. There is absolutely no drone use allowed inside the church. St. Thomas the Apostle does NOT provide live streaming of wedding ceremonies.

Photographers and videographers are required to review the guidelines and agree to the policies prior to the ceremony. St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church reserves the right to ask any photographer and/or videographer who violates these rules to either correct the violation immediately or to leave the premises. No exceptions will be made.

FAQs

What spaces are available for our use?

In most circumstances, the church is reserved for the bridal parties' use for decorations and pictures one hour before the wedding, depending upon the day and time of the wedding.

Does St. Thomas have Dressing Rooms?

Private dressing only available in the restrooms. Parish events may make this unavailable.

May we also use the facilities at the Saint Thomas the Apostle campus for a rehearsal dinner or wedding reception?

The Parish Center may be available. Check with the parish office, 208-664-9259, to inquire.

How many people does the church hold?

St. Thomas the Apostle fits 414 people in the pews.

When would our rehearsal be?

Typically, your rehearsal will take place the evening before your wedding at 5:30 p.m, however, previously arranged liturgical events will take precedence. Confirm your rehearsal time with the parish office.

Marriage License

If your celebration is not a *convalidation* of an existing civil marriage between the two of you, you must purchase a Marriage License in the County Recorder's Office. Please note that a priest or deacon cannot celebrate a marriage without a valid license.

Liturgical Norms

Liturgical norms must be followed as set down in the ritual for weddings and in the General instruction for the Mass. All readings are selected from the New American Bible. A list of approved readings can be found at foryourmarriage.org/readings/

*Please note, any Mass celebrated at St. Thomas the Apostle **must** be celebrated Novus Ordo

Who should we talk to about music for our wedding?

Because a wedding is a time of prayer as well as a celebration, the Church has extensive guidelines about what is appropriate music for weddings and what music is needed for a celebration of the Rite of Marriage. Sally Klumpe, our parish's music director, will give you guidance as to music requirements. Contact: 208-664-9259 x 5 or music@stthomascda.org. Music consultation should be made as early in the process as possible. Music is not included in your reservation fee. Guest musicians (you are responsible for this fee), friends and family—are welcome, however, Sally Klumpe must still be consulted as part of the planning process.

Who can be involved in the ceremony?

It is up to you to plan for the following options:

- Readers
- Servers: ONLY if they are already trained servers at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church and have served with the presiding priest before.
- Gift presenters may be family members or close friends.
- Musicians and cantors can be provided by the Church; any non-Parish musicians, cantors or soloists must be approved by our Music Director. She can be reached at 208-664-9259 x5 or music@stthomascda.org.

What do we need to know about Church decorations?

If you wish to have pew bows, they must clip or tie on to the pews (no tape, tacks or nails). Aisle candles and aisle runners of any kind are not allowed. The only candles burning during your wedding will be the ones lit by the sacristan or wedding guild member and any existing votives around the church.

All seasonal church decorations (flowers, banners, liturgical displays) are to remain in place.

In addition, please do not allow the throwing of fresh or artificial rose petals, rice, birdseed, and confetti, etc. If your guests really want to throw something, have them save it for when you are at the reception venue.

Where can we put flowers?

Flower arrangements may either be placed on the sides of the altar, or a single arrangement may be placed in front of the altar. No flower arrangements should ever be placed on the top of the altar. No floral arrangement of any sort - fresh or artificial - on pews or altar candles. No outside props or non vase containers (wagons, etc.).

Please incorporate decorations that keep the focus on the sacrament. Keep in mind the liturgical season in which your wedding ceremony will be held. During the Christmas and Easter seasons the church may already be decorated. If you plan to leave the flowers as a donation to the church after your ceremony, please notify us in advance so arrangements can be made for that.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All couples seeking a wedding at St. Thomas the Apostle must read and sign these wedding policies and guidelines.

By our signatures, we acknowledge that We have read, understand, and agree to the policies and procedures of having Our Wedding here at St. Thomas that we received.

Signatures & _____

Date